North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Final Management Plan

Restoration Plan Database:
Crystal Reports of Individual Plan Summaries

I. BASIC PLAN DATA

Plan name:

North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Final Management Plan

Brief description of plan:

The North Inlet-Winyah Bay ecosystems, located near Georgetown, SC, have been recognized at the state and national level as sites of particular interest for comparative ecological studies. The North Inlet estuary, an ecosystem which is relatively undisturbed by humans, has been the site of intensive study for 20 years. The Institute of Ecology and the National Science Foundation have given this area a rating of 98% for site quality. In contrast, the nearby Winyah Bay is an estuary which has been subjected to the influence of human activities. It is the connection to the sea of one of the largest watersheds on the East Coast south of Chesapeake Bay. This Final Management Plan establishes goals, program and facility needs as well as administrative framework policies and timetables to meet the goals. The plan is flexible and allows for review and revision for improving the Program. The overall philosophy of this Management Plan is to guide the development of a coordinated program of research, education and resource protection within the 9,000 acre North Inlet-Winyah Bay Reserve for balancing two key variables, setting of attainable goals and objectives, and enhancing resource protection of the estuarine environment.

Region the plan is located within:

South-Atlantic Region

Watershed(s) included within the plan:

S060x

Area plan covers (in square miles):

18,000.00 square miles

Plan scale:

County

Plan's lead organization(s):

NOAA, University of South Carolina, South Carolina Coastal Council

Plan's Main Contact Information:

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On-line version of plan:

Date of original plan:

10/1992

II. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Plan includes restoration goals: Y

Level of detail of the goals:

G

Summary of the goals:

The health, productivity and integrity of the estuarine reserve resources must be protected in order to provide a stable environment for research and education programs which are used to address coastal management issues. The goals of resource protection are to protect the natural status of the ecosystem(s) of the Reserve. Specific goals are- identifying priority resources, gathering baseline information on them, and establishing them as indicators of change; developing facilities and equipment as necessary to aid in research; seeking agreements with research organizations to facilitate and augment research projects; assisting in the collections of important baseline data to use in monitoring differences over time and for making comparisons with other areas; preserving estuarine ecosystems for continuous future use as natural field laboratories where information essential to coastal management decisions can be gathered and disseminated; ensuring a stable environment for research through long-term protection of estuarine areas, including open water and transitional area wetlands; protecting natural, pristine estuarine sites for education and interpretation programs; protecting the habitats of estuarine wildlife as an integral part of the natural system; controlling access to Hobcaw Barony in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement between the USC Institute, Clemson University and the Foundation; preventing degradation of the Reserve by outside activities; coordinating activities with the Baruch Foundation, local, state and Federal authorities.

Plan recommends or uses criteria for selecting restoration sites (e.g. cost benefit ratio, ecological benefits):

Y

Summary of the criteria:

NERRS regulations recognize that many estuarine areas have undergone ecological change as a result of human activities. Although restoration of degraded areas is not a primary purpose of NERRS, some restorative activities may be permitted in research reserves as specified in their management plan. Generally, restoration for single-species resource management or enhancement is not permissible; restoration must be community or ecosystem oriented. The South Carolina Coastal Management Act defines the critical area as all coastal waters, tidelands, beaches and primary oceanfront sand dunes within the coastal zone of the state. A permit is required for any activity which impacts a critical area; in order to receive a permit the activity must be evaluated in accordance with a strict set of policies and regulations.

Plan recommends restoration of specific project sites:

N

Plan includes a discussion of funding sources:

Y

Plan addresses long-term protection of restored sites:

Y

Partners included in developing the plan:

Federal
State
Local
Business/Industry
Academia
Foundations
Private landowners

Type(s) of public outreach included during plan development:

Information not available

Plan includes public outreach as part of plan implementation (e.g. annual public meeting, local group participation):

N

Plan discusses the application of innovative approaches to restoration:

N

Plan make use of GIS mapping capabilities:

N

Plan addresses monitoring/reference sites for ecosystem level monitoring (baseline conditions) by:

G

Plan addresses monitoring/reference sites for project level monitoring by:

G

The plan discusses or coordinates with other restoration plans covering the same geographic area:

N

Other plan names:

Plan contains detailed information on historic and/or current habitat size, rate of loss, acres restored or protected, etc.):

Y

Summary of this habitat information:

The North Inlet system offers outstanding examples of coastal wetland habitats that have been subjected to a minimum of human disturbances. In contrast, the neighboring Winyah Bay has been subjected to various industrial, residential, commercial, shipping and dredging activities in addition to receiving drainage waters from vast regions of North and South Carolina. Together these two estuaries present an excellent opportunity to compare and contrast ecosystem responses of an undisturbed estuary with those of a disturbed system. The areas included within the boundaries of the Reserve are in a high state of ecological quality, therefore no plans have been developed to undertake habitat restoration. Results of research conducted within the Reserve on relatively pristine areas will be applied to other (disturbed) sites in order to develop a scientific basis for habitat restoration.